

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1. (currently amended): A[[n]] cutting apparatus comprising:

a support for holding a wafer having a protective tape thereon;

a cutting element placed at a first predetermined distance from said support for moving relative to said support to cut a portion of the protective tape from the wafer when the wafer is placed on the support;

a sensor for detecting if the portion of the protective tape on a wafer is properly removed by said cutting element;

a transport mechanism for moving the wafer from support to a grinding apparatus if the portion of the protective tape on the wafer is properly removed; and

a circuit for initiating corrective action to stop the transport mechanism from moving the wafer to the grinding apparatus when the sensor detects that the protective tape is not properly removed from a wafer by said cutting element.

Claim 2. (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the circuit for initiating corrective action stops operation of said cutting apparatus.

Claim 3 (cancelled)

Claim 4. (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the circuit for initiating corrective action prevents a backgrinding apparatus from grinding the wafer.

Claim 5. (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sensor is an mechanical sensor.

Claim 6 (cancelled)

Claim 7. (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first predetermined distance is approximately 0.5 mm from the edge of the wafer when the wafer is placed on said support.

Claim 8. (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sensor is placed behind the cutting element in a direction of cutting action of said cutting element.

Claims 9-15 (cancelled)